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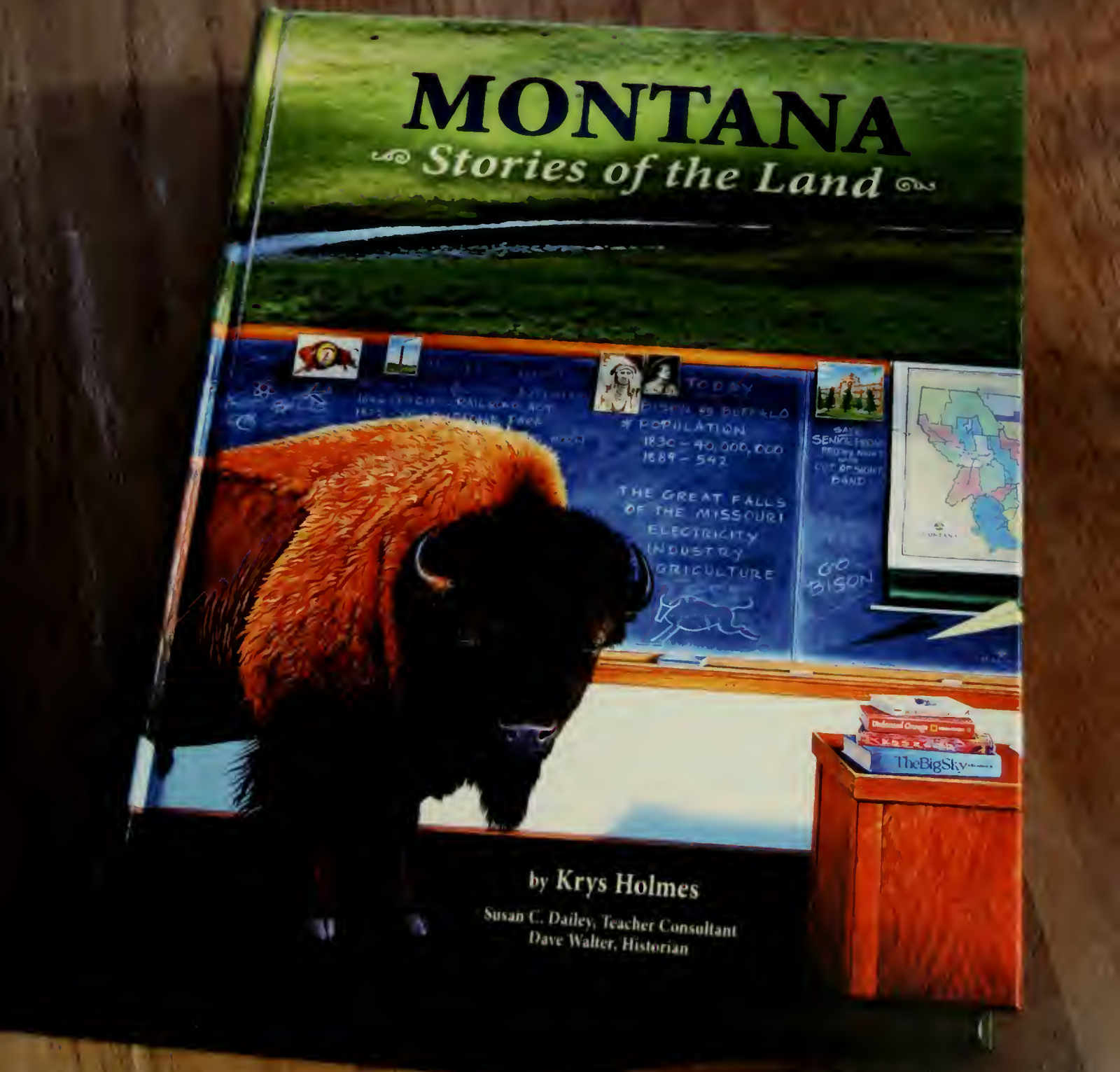
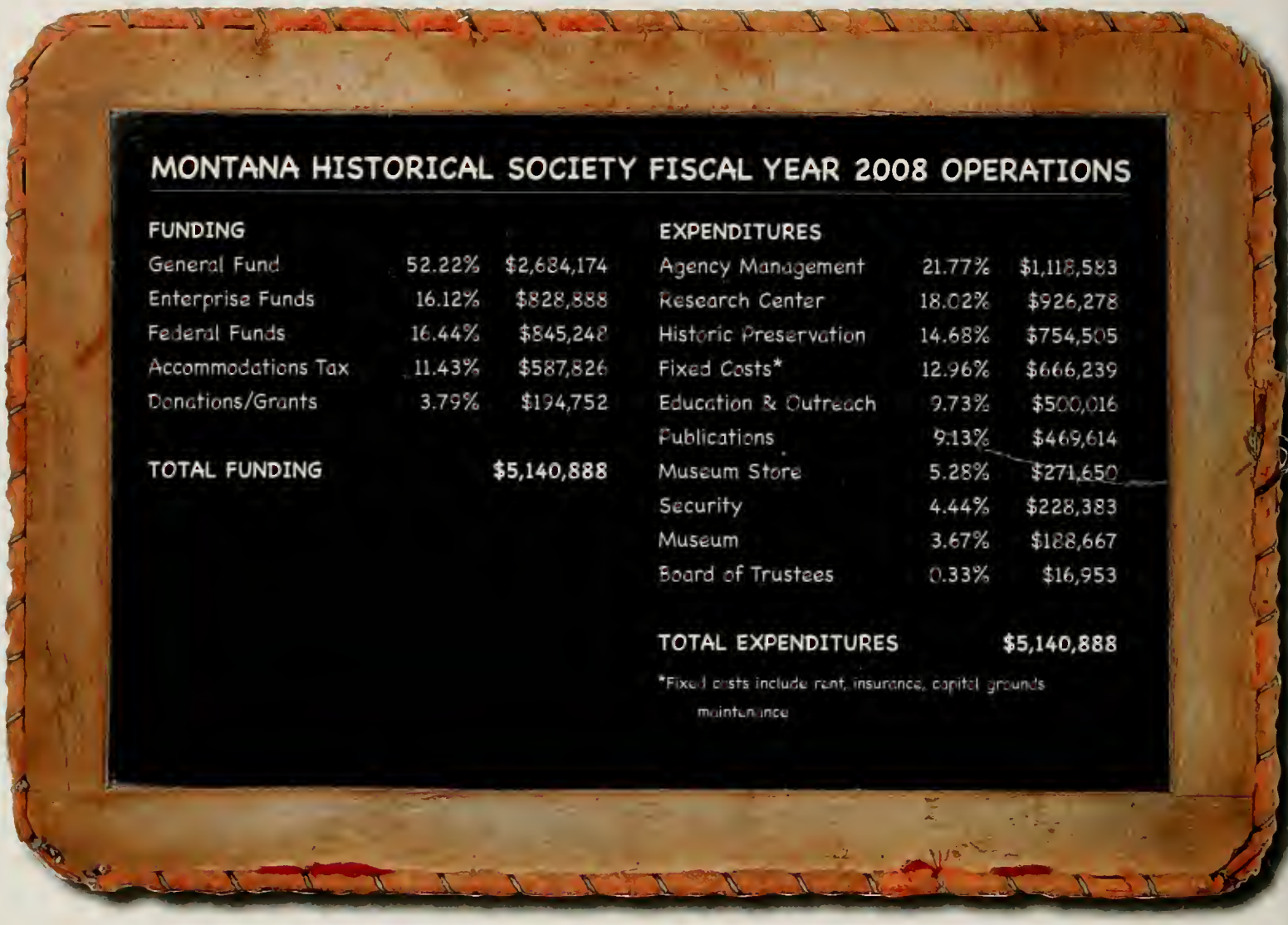
ONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2007 – JUNE 30, 2008



SHARING HISTORY UNDER THE BIG SKY



Cover Image: *The new Montana history textbook,* Montana: Stories of the Land, *published in 2008 by the Montana Historical Society, Geoff Wyatt, photographer*

Slate chalk board, 1880–1889, Montana Historical Society Museum collection, Gift of the American Association of University Women–Helena Branch, J. M. Cooper, photographer

Fiscal Year 2008 Financial Highlights

The Montana Historical Society was allocated $ 2,684,174 in general fund support from the Montana Legislature for State fiscal year 2008. These funds are used for general operations and personal services. Additionally, the Montana Historical Society received $ 587,826 in Accommodation Tax, which in part supported the following: National Register signs and historic places program, museum exhibits, Scriver collection, education and outreach programs.

The Society received $845,248 in federal funds. The majority of these funds supported the State Historical Preservation Office in their mission to promote and facilitate the preservation of our state's historic, archaeological, and traditional cultural places.

The Society's enterprise fund generated $ 828,888 to support of the Society store and the Publication program with the production of the award winning *Montana The Magazine of Western History* and Montana's scholarly book publishing house.

Through donations and grants the Society received $ 194,752 to support projects within the Society.

The Montana Historical Society concluded State fiscal year 2008 in a healthy financial position.

Montana State Library
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From the Director:

Every day I study the large map of Montana on my office wall. It is slowly being covered with Post-its of various colors, as we note every community to which we have delivered funding and consultation.

While our efforts to launch a facility expansion campaign have been stalled as the debate continues over the site, the array of colored paper shows that we aren't just hunkered in the saddle waiting for a giddy-up. During the fiscal year running from July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008, your Montana Historical Society increased its service to all 56 counties in Big Sky country.

Our Education team (green Post-its on the map) is increasing its outreach and teaching training after providing teachers that most valuable of tools—our superb new history textbook.

Our Museum team (blue Post-its) continues to provide advice on exhibit development and collections management, and oversee grants of $7,500 to 20 small museums to help improve their work with Indian education and Indian peoples.

Our Historic Preservation team (gold Post-its) has been re-granting federal funds for historic barns and community programs.

Our Research Center (yellow Post-its) has launched its County Initiatives program, helping history be preserved in various clusters of counties.

And our Publications program (purple Post-its) could cover the map if we identified every member of the Society, every subscriber to our magazine, every venue where our books and magazines are sold.

Perhaps this time next year I'll not be able to see my Montana map. It will be smothered with a blanket of Post-its, from Yaak to Ekalaka. Then I'll need a virtual map to record all of our work around the state and return my wall map to its traditional use—look, see, and do.

Richard Sims

Richard Sims, Director
Montana Historical Society

Society at a Glance

- Governed by a 15-member statewide volunteer Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor.
- Organized into six specialized programs: Education & Outreach, Historic Preservation, Museum, Publications, Research Center, and Administration.
- All services provided by 53 full-time and 15 part-time employees and with an annual budget of $5.1 million.
- Holds in trust for Montana and provides access to over 50,000 books; 455,000 historical photographs; 8,000 maps; 2,000 oral history interviews; 25,000 linear feet of manuscripts and state records; 55,000 artifacts; 8,000 pieces of artwork; 46,800 inventory files for all recorded Montana archaeological, historic, and architectural sites; and 29,600 cultural resource survey reports.
- Publishes an award-winning quarterly western history journal and one to two new books each year.
- Lists Montana properties in the National Register of Historic Places, supports local preservation efforts, and promotes $3 million to $5 million in historic preservation rehabilitation work through tax credit incentives annually.
- Manages the Original Governor's Mansion in Helena as an historic house museum with support provided by a citizen restoration board.
- Provides guided tours of the Capitol, Montana's Museum and the Original Governor's Mansion; over 54,000 members of the public toured the facilities in FY2008
- Served over 37,500 Montana school children with educational outreach resources in FY2008.
- Relies on tax-deductible charitable gifts, fundraisers and private and public grants to fund over half of our annual expenses; half of our budget is provided by direct State appropriations.

SHARING HISTORY UNDER THE BIG SKY

Schoolroom in Marsh, Montana, 1914, Evelyn Cameron, photographer, Montana Historical Society Photo Archives Pac90-87.63-3

The Purpose of the Montana Historical Society—

to acquire, conserve, and advocate the protection of, provide broad access to, and interpret Montana's varied historical resources, thus promoting—for its citizens and for all others—the use, understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of those resources.

Over the past year, nearly 39,000 people have visited Montana's Museum at the Montana Historical Society. The museum offered visitors 13 temporary and permanent exhibits featuring Montana's art and history, three of which were new offerings:

- *E.B. Craney Collection of Montana Art* —opened November 2007
- *Sitting Proudly, Indian Portraits of Joseph Scheuerle*—opened June 2008
- *Traditions in Color and Comfort: Montana's Quilting Heritage*—opened June 2008

Over 5,000 people across the state enjoyed the museum's four **traveling exhibits**:

- The new *On Track: the Railroad Photographs of Warren McGee* premiered at the Livingston Depot Center.
- Another new traveling exhibit, *Montana by Food: A Taste of the Past,* was hosted by the Flathead Community College in Kalispell, the Philips County Museum in Malta, and the Blaine County Museum in Chinook.
- *Hope in Hard Times* was shown at the Western Heritage Center

in Billings, where Montana State University history professor Mary Murphy presented a program about the depression era in Montana for the exhibit's opening.

- *Photographing Montana 1894-1928: The World of Evelyn Cameron* was exhibited at the Polson Flathead Historical Museum and at the Arlee Historical Society and Museum.

Learning traditional tribal games on the Society's lawn, 2008, J. M. Cooper, photographer

Our **public events** have also drawn large numbers of members, visitors, and others who feel a deep affinity for Montana's history. For example, approximately 200 people enjoyed delicious helpings of the past at the 34th annual **Montana History Conference**, held Oct. 18-20, 2007, in Helena. The three-day workshop, entitled *Serving Up a Taste of the Past*, featured a smorgasbord of speakers, workshops and tours following a spirited opening performance by folksinger Bill Rossiter, who started off the conference with a celebration of Montana "foodways" in song. Honored during the conference were University of Montana history professor Harry Fritz, who received the Trustees' Award, the Society's highest honor, and Thompson Falls High School teacher Glenn Garrison, who received the Trustees' Montana Educator's Award.

Numerous other special events were just as popular:

- **Archaeology Day** took place on the Society's front lawn Sept. 6, 2007. Activities included atlatl throwing, stone boiling, flint-knapping, native plant use, and a prehistoric technology demonstration. An estimated 250 students and teachers participated in the event.
- **Archives Week** was celebrated with an open house and behind-the-scenes tours of the archives on Oct. 31, 2007.
- The Society participated in a **sneak preview of Ken Burns' documentary** *The War* Sept. 21, 2007, at the Myrna Loy Center in Helena. The evening program, sponsored by the Friends of Montana PBS, featured segments from the 14-hour WWII history film, which premiered on Sept. 23, as well as a screening of the Montana PBS-produced documentary on Montana in WWII: *Montana-Home Front: United or Divided*, which drew on the Society's collections. Society staff presented an overview of the Society's research holdings in WWII-era Montana history and featured the *Home Fires: Montana in WWII* Hands-On History footlocker.
- In December 2007, the Society hosted **History's Home for the Holidays**, a month-long community appreciation event. In addition to free admission to the Museum and the Original Governor's Mansion, the public received discounts on Society membership and special sales in the Museum Store. Book signings were held each Saturday featuring authors of Montana history publications.

The Smithsonian Institution Affiliation Program's Director, Harold Closter (right) and Regional Director Aaron Glavas, (center) welcomes the Montana Historical Society into the Smithsonian family at a ceremony with Director Richard Sims in Feb. 2008, J. M. Cooper, photographer

- "Joining Hands with the Nation's Museum: A Celebration of Montana Art & Culture" comprised a series of special events held Feb. 9-16, 2008, to celebrate the Society's new **Smithsonian Institution Affiliation** status. The Montana Historical Society joined 156 institutions in the nation with such a designation. A public announcement and celebration of the Society's affiliation was attended by Smithsonian officials as well as representatives of Montana's Congressional Delegation and the Governor's Office. Other programs included Heritage Quilt Registration, book signings, Indian games, Irish Dancers, traditional music, C. M. Russell Gallery tours, and presentations on Montana legislative history, Montana's African American heritage, and historic barns of Montana.

Dancer at 2008 Indian Education For All event at the Society, Tom Ferris, photographer

Volunteer docent giving a school tour of Neither Empty Nor Unknown exhibit, 2008, J. M. Cooper, photographer

Events held at the Original Governor's Mansion also drew large crowds.

- The **27th Annual Original Governor's Mansion Holiday Home Tour**, "Hats Off to the Holidays," held Dec. 2, 2007, attracted more than 400 people. In addition to five wonderful homes decorated for the holidays, visitors enjoyed vintage hats from the Society's collection and a large private collection of vintage ornaments on display at the Mansion.
- More than 100 people attended **A Victorian Doll Party**, held in August 2008, and enjoyed refreshments, doll-related crafts, and a doll-themed tour of the mansion.
- The **2008 Secret Garden Tour**, sponsored by the Original Governor's Mansion Restoration Society on June 22, featured six of Helena's most beautiful and interesting gardens. Activities at the Mansion included a gourmet lunch on the lawn, a marketplace, and historic quilts displayed throughout the house. Nearly 600 people visited the Mansion during the event, and even more participated in the garden tour.

More than 3,000 people attended 75 public programs at the Society during the year, including the Society's monthly book discussions, **Pages in History**. In addition to the regular Thursday night presentations at the Society, staff gave scores of presentations **on the road** in communities throughout the state, reaching over 1,500 people.

Vital to the success of many of the Society's events is **The Friends of the Society**. In the last year, more than 131 volunteers provided guided tours of the museum; hosted receptions for workshops and exhibit openings; transcribed oral histories; helped organize artifact, photograph, and historic preservation records; prepared letters and mailings; and assisted as needed with special events.

In 2008, The Friends of the Society annual **March Lecture Series** celebrated Women's History Month. Presentations focused on African-American women in Montana, women in Montana's prison, the role of women in early Helena, and Grace Stone Coates, Martinsdale poet and author.

An Appreciation Lunch was held in April 2008 for the Friends of the Society, who have aided our organization since 1972. Former First Lady Betty Babcock spoke about her efforts to publish the *Montana Centennial Cookbook*, complementing the Friends' new project to produce their own cookbook, *Treasured Recipes from the Friends of the Montana Historical Society*. During the luncheon, The Friends presented the Society with a symbolic check for $108,000 representing the more than 6,000 hours contributed by the volunteers in the past year.

The Society also helps citizens access their history individually:

- The **Research Center** assisted 13,315 patrons with research requests. Of those requests, nearly 4,500 were from people who visited the Research Center facilities in person.
- The **Historic Preservation Office** responded to 1,779 written requests from organizations, agencies, businesses, and the public for information and assessments of projects with the potential to impact historical properties and archeological sites.
- **Montana's Museum** answered 469 research requests from the public, including museums, cultural organizations, individuals, and agencies of government.
- The **Photograph Archives** completed 419 orders for reproductions of 2,589 items in the collections. The Research Center also reproduced 104 maps, and 449 tapes and CDs for patrons, and the museum processed 65 orders for photo reproductions of images in its collection.

Preserving History Under the Big Sky

Acquisitions are a critical part of preserving Montana's past. In fiscal year 2008, 101 accessions, totaling 478 items, were processed into the Museum collection. Of particular note were **artifacts from Fort Assiniboine** (two glass decanters, leather wallet, needlepoint chair covers); the Irene Wold White collection of items related to her service as a World War II Army Nurse; an original Earl E. Heikka sculpture, "**War Wagon**," two magnificent Cheyenne beaded tobacco bags, c.1870, donated by Daniel Eudaily; and a **Joseph Scheurele** painting and portfolio of prints.

The Research Center added 9,579 items and 77 collections (144 linear feet) to its collections, including 670 books, 40 oral history interviews, and 8,787 images. Collections of note include letters of support to **Jeannette Rankin** for her "no" vote on entering World War I in 1917; over 3,000 photographs documenting the personal life and political career of **Senator Lee Metcalf**; and an 1883 travel guide to the Rocky Mountains by E. J. Farmer entitled *Resources of the Rocky Mountains.*

Online with the Society

The Society made great strides in the last year to share more of Montana's history online. For example, the Society's education outreach materials can now be reserved online, making it more convenient for users of this service as well as freeing up staff time.

Among the other new online resources at *www.montanahistoricalsociety.org* are:

- ***Not in Precious Metals Alone***, published by the Society in 1976, is available as a keyword-searchable, primary resource for teachers and students. The project was funded by a Golden Triangle Curriculum Cooperative's Thinking Through American History grant and also included development of a teacher's guide and a student's guide, with original materials from the Archives collections.
- Additions to the **Montana History WIKI**. New features include guides to collections on mining history and labor history as well as information on vertical file and newspaper collections. Also new is a Lewis and Clark County History page, created as a joint project with the Lewis and Clark County Library to help local school students conducting research on local people and events, and "Contributions from the Public," which allows Society patrons to submit their research on Montana History for inclusion on the site.
- Screen casts explaining **how to complete an online reference** request and how to search the Research Center's online catalog are new online resources.

Other technology-assisted improvements were made to improve access:

- All back issues of ***Montana The Magazine of Western History*** are now text-searchable PDF files on the academic database JSTOR. *Montana* is the first state historical society journal to be included in this prestigious project.
- The Montana Historical Society Press joined **Google's Book Search Program**. Society Press books are sent to Google, where they will be scanned and content made available in searchable segments.
- Acquisition of new equipment is furthering the Research Center's **digitization** program.
- The **Montana Livestock Brand Registers**, previously available on microfilm, are now available online through the Montana Memory Project at www.mtmemory.org.
- Montana's Museum now has 28,130 digital object catalog records available.

First Lady Laura Bush and Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne presents the Society's 2007 Preserve America *grant to MHS National Register Coordinator Kate Hampton in Washington DC, photograph courtesy of Preserve America*

Other highlights of the Society's efforts at preservation in the past year include:

- Installation of a 76-drawer storage unit for **Native American artifacts** in the museum's main storage area, allowing staff to begin rehousing the collections. The project was funded as a result of the museum's participation in the Indian Education for All "Best Practices" seminar.
- Addition of new shelving units to the Scriver Curatorial Center, providing greater access and improved storage for artifacts.
- Conservation of the Russell mural, ***Lewis and Clark Meeting Indians at Ross' Hole***, at the State Capitol by contract conservator Randy Ash and her assistant Walter Davis.
- Completion of the balustrade restoration project at the Original Governor's Mansion.
- Evaluation of the Research Center **library map collection** and paper conservation training for staff. Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the findings of the evaluation will assist in preservation of these heavily used resources.

To fulfill its mandate to preserve Montana's history, the Society's Historic Preservation Office works closely with local preservation organizations as well as individuals, businesses and government. One of the largest efforts in fiscal year 2008 was the **5th Annual Montana Preservation Workshop** held in conjunction with the 2007 Montana History Conference. Historic preservation forums combined with the conference included three preservation workshops, a statewide Certified Local Government meeting, a Montana Preservation Alliance Awards Luncheon, and five preservation sessions.

Other examples of preservation efforts by the Society in fiscal year 2008 include:

- As of June 30, 2008, 1,058 Montana properties have been listed in the **National Register of Historic Places**, 14 of which were listed during the past fiscal year.
- The Society's **National Register Sign Program** manufactured 42 National Register signs throughout the state, as well as special grant-funded signs for the World Museum of Mining

and the Lewistown Satellite Airbase.

- Staff added 889 newly recorded historic and archeological properties and 717 cultural resource reports to the **State Antiquities Database.**

The Society also helps to preserve Montana's history via funding.

- The Historic Preservation Office awarded $1,300 **travel scholarships** to local preservation participants attending the annual preservation workshop.
- Another $15,000 was awarded in state matched funds for qualified rehabilitation projects of **historic barns** and related agricultural properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Of that, $10,000 was given to the J. C. Adams Stone Barn near Great Falls for roof and window repairs and $5,000 to the Livery Stable at Fort Assiniboine outside Havre for masonry, window, and woodwork rehabilitation.
- Society **Sobotka Expendable Trust Archaeology Grant** awards were given to Dr. Jack Fisher (Montana State University) for archaeological research at Horseshoe Cave/24RB1094 in Rosebud County ($5,000) and to Doug Melton, BLM Miles City Archaeologist, for radio-carbon dating of archaeological layers at Deadman Cave/24CR0297 in Custer County ($2,500).
- Grants totaling $35,138 were awarded by the Historic Preservation Office from funding provided by the National Park Service's **Preserve America** project to:
  - Butte Citizens for Preservation and Revitalization — $4,270 for hands-on preservation workshops
  - Butte-Silver Bow County — $8,000 for special Butte/Anaconda preservation issue of *Drumlummon Views*
  - Havre — $7,100 for Havre Railroad and Downtown Historic District walking tour, programs, and website
  - Great Falls — $3,000 for Missouri River Corridor walking tour brochures
  - Missoula — $12,768 for 2009 Experience Missoula Heritage Festival

One of the Officer's Quarters buildings, Fort Assiniboine, Montana, undated, photographer unknown, Montana Historical Society Photo Archives 946-932

Promoting History Under the Big Sky

Perhaps there is no more important role of the Society than to educate Montana's children so they too will come to love their history—and preserve it for generations to come. Completion of ***Montana: Stories of the Land***, therefore, was a milestone for the Society in fiscal year 2008.

Of the 6,500 copies of the eighth-grade history textbook printed, 5,000 were donated to Montana schools. A teacher's guide with worksheets, tests, and other resource materials was developed to accompany the textbook.

Many other events targeted teachers and school children as well:

- Three new tours for school group audiences and three lesson plans for classroom educators were developed as companion teaching tools for the Society's ***Neither Empty nor Unknown*** exhibit, targeting grades K-4, 5-8, and 9-12.
- The Society organized and presented a highly successful **History Day in Fort Benton** for teachers and students from the Golden Triangle Teaching American History Grant. Approximately 240 students and teachers from a dozen rural communities participated.
- The Society organized a day-long workshop on **Indian Education for All** at Helena High School which brought together 10 presenters and 200 high school seniors.
- A pilot project with **Jefferson Elementary School** in Helena continued with a goal to identify new ways to incorporate the museum into the classroom. Student groups from Helena, Willow Creek, and East Helena received training in historical research techniques.
- Three **major institutes** were presented: the Montana Country History Initiative Steering Committee (May), the Indian Education for All Best Practices for Museums and Educators (June), and Celebrating Community: County History in the Classroom (June).
- The Society's free three-day **2008 Summer Teacher Institute**, "Celebrating Community: County History in the Classroom," was held in June in Helena. Session leaders included noted historians, heritage education leaders and celebrated authors.

The Hockaday Museum of Art, Kalispell, and educators of the Blackfeet Indian Nation brought Plains Indian culture to schools in 2008 through assistance from the Indian Education For All Best Practices initiative, Tom Cook, photographer

The Society is also working with educators and others on a new statewide effort. The **Montana County History Initiative** was launched with a conference in May 2008 attended by 22 people from museums, libraries, historic preservation offices, and schools. The history initiative will assist organizations and communities statewide with research and other outreach resources for the large number of Montana counties that will be celebrating centennials over the next several years. In addition to the Society, Steering Committee members include the Montana State Library-Montana Memory Project and the Natural Resource Information System, Montana Department of Commerce-Census and Economic Information Center, Montana State Historical Records Advisory Board, the Museums Association of Montana, and the Montana Association of Counties. Six regional conferences will be part of the second phase of this project.

In addition to promoting history through education, the Society excels in producing publications that put the public in touch with history day to day. Fiscal year 2008 publications by the MHS Press include:

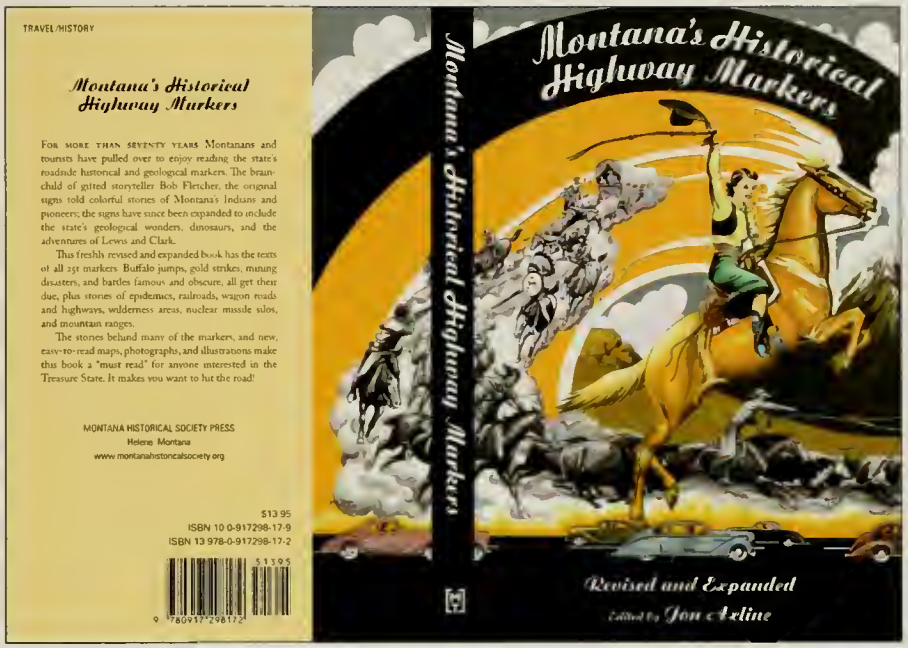
- ***The History of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, Montana, 1800-2000***, a 500-page history of the reservation and tribes by Joe McGeschick, David Miller, Jim Shanley, Caleb Shields, and Dennis Smith, co-published by the Fort Peck Tribes.
- ***Guide to Historic Bozeman***, by former Bozeman historic preservation officer Jim Jenks, the seventh book in the Montana Mainstreet series.
- The ***Charlie Russell Journal***, by Kirby Lambert, with *Charlie Russell and His Friends* as the cover. The journal showcases Russell's line drawings held in the MHS collection.
- ***Montana Historical Highway Markers***, edited by Jon Axline and funded by the Montana Department of Transportation. It includes the text of the historical markers that dot Montana highways as well as new color maps and illustrations with a color signature that showcases the artwork of Shorty Shope.

The Society's efforts to fulfill its mission have earned both recognition and financial support.

- The Society received a special recognition award for its Native

American education programming from KTVH TV, Helena, and the Sylvan Learning Center.

- Brian Cannon's article, "**Mormonism in Montana,**" which appeared in the Spring 2006 issue of *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, was presented the Mormon History Association T. Edgar Lyon Award for Best Article of the Year in 2007.
- Dennis Swibold's ***Copper Chorus***, an MHS Press book, was a finalist for the High Plains Book Awards Best First Book Award.


TRAVEL/HISTORY
Montana's Historical Highway Markers
For more than seventy years Montanans and tourists have pulled over to enjoy reading the state's roadside historical and geological markers. The brainchild of gifted storyteller Bob Fletcher, the original signs told colorful stories of Montana's Indians and pioneers; the signs have since been expanded to include the state's geological wonders, dinosaurs, and the adventures of Lewis and Clark.
This freshly revised and expanded book has the texts of all 251 markers. Buffalo jumps, gold strikes, mining disasters, and battles famous and obscure, all get their due, plus stories of epidemics, railroads, wagon roads and highways, wilderness areas, nuclear missile silos, and mountain ranges.
The stories behind many of the markers, and new, easy-to-read maps, photographs, and illustrations make this book a "must read" for anyone interested in the Treasure State. It makes you want to hit the road!
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Montana's Historical Highway Markers
Revised and Expanded
Edited by Jon Axline

Among the grants and donations received in fiscal year 2008 were:

- Major funding for the new textbook, ***Montana: Stories of the Land***, from the Steele Reese Foundation, the Montana History Foundation, PPL Montana, the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, The Bair Trust and Montana's Office of Public Instruction.
- $10,000 from the Montana Land Title Association Foundation in continuing support of the **National Register Heritage Property Fund** for nominations of significant historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places.
- From Humanities Montana, a $6,000 book subvention grant to help fund the Society's quilt book project, ***Border to Border: Historic Quilts and Quiltmakers of Montana.***
- $20,000 for the Education and Outreach Program from the **Big Read Program** of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. With these funds the Society will introduce a new generation of Montanans to *The Grapes of Wrath*, the classic novel of the depression-era by John Steinbeck. Copies of *The Grapes of Wrath* and a related Montana-specific publication, *Hope in Hard Times*, will be provided to select Montana schools, along with in-school programming. Public outreach activities in Montana communities are also planned.
- A cost-share grant from the **National Park Service** Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Challenge of $30,000 to fund educational tours, curriculum, and publication relating to the *Neither Empty Nor Unknown* exhibit.
- $36,000 from the Golden Triangle Curriculum Cooperative's **Thinking Through American History** grant program to develop on-line history resources for Montana K-12 teachers.
- A **Preserve America** grant from the National Park Service for $149, 979, awarded in 2007 to fund six Montana community historical surveys and a tribal heritage resources summit.

- A Montana Office of Public Instruction, **Indian Education for All** grant of $170,000 funded the second *Indian Education for All Best Practices: Museums and Schools as Co-Educators* seminar and allowed the Society to re-grant funds to ten community museums for enhancing Indian education programs.

In addition, the Society learned in 2008 that it will receive $142,000 to produce an exhibition commemorating the centennial of **Glacier National Park** in collaboration with the National Park Service. Educational programming, including a traveling version of the exhibit and traveling Hands-On History footlockers for schools, will also be created to celebrate the Park's 100th anniversary in 2010. The project is being funded by the Glacier National Park Fund and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Foundation.

Greetings from the Board of Trustees:

It is my pleasure to present to you the 2008 Montana Historical Society Annual Report. Our theme this year—Sharing History Under the Big Sky—highlights the many ways in which the Society has reached out across the state to share, preserve, and promote Montana's great history for the enjoyment of its citizens. We especially celebrate the new Montana textbook, *Stories of the Land,* published by the Society last fall, which is a wonderful achievement that will be a lasting resource for Montana's schools.

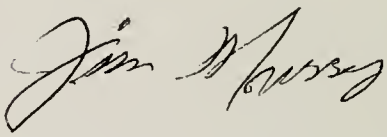
As you will read in the letter from the director and throughout the annual report, the Society has done much over the last year to fulfill our guiding vision of being a Society as big as the scenery. I look forward to working with the staff and director as well as the new officers and the rest of the Board to do even more to further that vision.

The trustees bring a wealth of capabilities to work on behalf of the Society. Our experience and expertise in historic archaeology, historic preservation, K-12 education, American Indian material culture, nonprofit management, government affairs, hospitality industry, museum management, financial management, tribal government, publishing, fine art gallery management, historical interpretation, and marketing help us represent a true cross section of Montana life. That depth of that knowledge strengthens the deliberations of our body.

We will draw on our experience in coming months as we look for ways to fulfill our mission in the face of difficult economic times. It is my belief that this is a challenge our team is well suited to address.

During the upcoming 61st Montana Legislative Assembly, for instance, trustees will play a day to day role, staying in touch with their area legislators to keep them informed of the needs and activities of the Society. I am confident we will be effective. The Society strives to maintain transparency in all we do and to work closely with the legislators, beginning with our traditional Open House when we welcome legislators from both parties to our facilities to break bread, walk through our museum, and discuss the work of the organization.

Our message to the Legislature, our members, and the public as a whole doesn't change: the Society belongs to the people of this great state. Its stories are the stories of our past, our present, and our future. Montana and its people deserve the best, and all of us with the Society are determined to deliver our best effort in celebrating Montana's history.



Jim Murry, President
Montana Historical Society Board of Trustees

MHS Board of Trustees, 2007-2008

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** Term completed*

Big Sky. Big Land. Big History.
Montana Historical Society

2,250 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of $1.24 per copy, for a total cost of $2,792 which includes $2,044 for printing and $748 for distribution.